

American

NEWS & VIEWS

A Weekly Newsletter from Public Affairs, American Embassy

May 17, 2013

Iranians Deserve Better from Their Government, Diplomat Says	1
Growth in U.S. Energy Production Brings Global Policy Changes	2
U.S. Policy Spotlights the Human Right of Religious Freedom.....	3
U.S. Diaspora Communities Could Strengthen Middle East Nations	4
Secretary Kerry on Climate Change, Future of the Arctic.....	4
President Obama, U.K.'s Cameron Discuss G8 Summit, Regional Issues	5
Boston Police Join International Efforts to Combat Crime.....	6
Global Harvests Projected to Reach Record Levels	7

Iranians Deserve Better from Their Government, Diplomat Says

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr. | Staff Writer | 16 May 2013

Washington — Under Secretary of State Wendy Sherman told a congressional panel that the Iranian regime has chosen to isolate its people, stunt the country's economic growth, repress freedom of expression and align the nation with global terrorism and extremist groups.

"Iranians deserve better. Iran's government can choose to end these policies at any time and put their people's well being first," Sherman told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee at a May 15 hearing on U.S. policy toward Iran.

The Iranian people are being affected by misplaced priorities, corruption and government mismanagement, added Sherman, who is the under secretary for political affairs at the State Department.

"Instead of meeting the needs of its own people, the Iranian regime has chosen to spend enormous amounts of its money and resources to support the Assad regime [Syrian President Bashar al-Assad] as well as its militant proxies around the world, and to pursue the development of weapons of mass destruction," Sherman added.

"Instead of investing in its people, Iran continues to restrain their vast potential through censorship, oppression and severe limitations on their social, political and even academic freedom."

In the United States, Sherman says, the opposite is true. President Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry have repeatedly said that American communities have been enhanced by the contributions of Iranian Americans, a people who have come from a great civilization and whose accomplishments have earned the respect of the world, she said.

"That is why in his 2013 Nowruz message, the president emphasized that there is no good reason for Iranians to be denied the opportunities enjoyed by people in other countries," she testified. "Iranians deserve the same freedoms and rights as people everywhere, and all nations would benefit from the talents and creativity of the Iranian people, especially its youth."

The United States has been increasingly concerned by the Iranian regime's continuing campaign of repression against its own people, which has included harassment and intimidation of the families of those who speak out for freedoms and civil liberties, torture of political prisoners and limitations applied to freedom of expression and access to information such as the Internet.

Sherman said that these acts have created a culture of fear in which few dare to voice dissent or challenge the regime. She added that students, lawyers, journalists and bloggers, ethnic and religious minorities, artists and human rights activists are all targets for abuse, intimidation or discrimination.

The global press advocacy group Reporters Without Borders has described the Iranian regime as an "enemy of the Internet." The Iranian government filters online content and blocks access to the Internet in an effort to prevent Iranian citizens from acquiring knowledge and unbiased information about their own country and the outside world, Sherman told senators.

"We are committed to raise the cost of repression and help Iranians break through the 'electronic curtain' the regime is erecting to communicate with one another and share their story with the world," Sherman added in her testimony.

In other Senate testimony on Iran, Sherman said that the United States has developed a multistrategy approach for dealing with the many challenges posed by Iran in addition to its human rights abuses — an unchecked nuclear weapons development program, support for international terrorism and destabilizing activities throughout the Middle East.

Iran's nuclear development program violates its international obligations, is in defiance of the international community and poses one of the greatest challenges the United States faces, she told senators.

"A nuclear-armed Iran would pose a threat to the region, to the world and to the future of the global nuclear proliferation regime," Sherman said. "It would risk an arms race in a region already rife with violence and conflict."

Sherman testified that a nuclear weapons regime would spread instability through proxies of Iran and threaten choke points for the global economy.

The United States is pursuing a dual-track strategy — one that encourages diplomatic resolution through the P5+1 group, which includes the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council (Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States) and Germany under the auspices of the European Union.

"There is still time for [Iran] to change course, but that time is not indefinite," Sherman said. "I want to be clear that our policy is not aimed at regime change, but rather at changing the regime's behavior."

The second part of the dual-track approach has been the

application of increasingly stringent economic sanctions that are affecting the country's ability to raise money globally and to sell oil. Each day Iran exports 1 million fewer barrels of oil, which is costing the regime \$3 billion to \$5 billion a month, she added.

Sherman told the Senate committee that the United States has grave concerns about the Iranian regime's support for terrorism and destabilizing activities in the Middle East, including its support for the violently repressive regime of Syrian President Assad against the Syrian people and its support for terrorist groups such as Hezbollah.

Growth in U.S. Energy Production Brings Global Policy Changes

By Charlene Porter | Staff Writer | 16 May 2013

Washington — Use of new technologies is bringing unexpectedly large increases in available, affordable energy for the United States, a trend that will ripple through global markets, the energy supply chain and economies.

At the same time, the world faces scientifically confirmed changes in the environment, brought on largely by emissions from burning fossil fuels. A steadily increasing body of research has convinced policymakers and corporate interests that cleaner, renewable technologies must be brought into wide-scale use rapidly to lower emission output and arrest warming trends.

National Security Advisor Tom Donilon outlined the challenges in a recent Washington speech. He explained how the United States is working "to seize the opportunities this moment presents and meet its challenges head on."

Technological advances have enabled U.S. companies to increase production in both oil and natural gas in recent years, increasing the nation's energy independence and decreasing its need for oil production from other nations. Donilon said the U.S. policies favoring investment and entrepreneurship have supported "skilled service companies" in this positive trend.

"In 2005, 60 percent of U.S. oil was imported," Donilon said. "Today the number is 40 percent and falling — a dramatic move towards fulfilling the president's goal of cutting our oil imports in half by 2020." Imports of natural gas are also declining as the United States has become the world's leading natural gas producer.

This development is largely attributable to innovations that allow extraction of previously unrecoverable fuels from shale rock formations. Hydraulic fracturing involves injecting high-pressure water into cracks in underground formations, thus widening the cracks, allowing oil or gas

to flow out.

The process, widely known as "fracking," has encountered resistance, generated controversy and raised questions about potential environmental consequences. It has also created jobs and revitalized depressed areas where mines of another era were abandoned and are now being reopened with promises that new techniques will yield production.

Donilon said some industry predictions foresee these trends making the Americas the source of two-thirds of global energy supply increases over the next 20 years.

Greater energy independence brings economic strength, more jobs and less vulnerability to volatile swings in world energy markets. "America's new energy posture allows us to engage from a position of greater strength," Donilon said.

Those factors have enabled the United States to urge other nations to adopt oil sanctions against Iran while still influencing suppliers to keep oil flowing, the White House security advisor explained. The gambit has reduced the sale of Iranian oil by 1 million barrels a day with little pain to consuming nations.

"And the same dynamic was at work in Libya in 2011 and in Syria today," he said.

Less dependence on foreign oil does not justify U.S. withdrawal from global affairs, Donilon said. Energy markets that are diverse, well supplied and stable will be an "enduring interest" for the United States. To that end, U.S. diplomats are engaged in international dialogues to avert potential energy conflict.

The United States is also providing other governments with regulatory and technical support to enable these nations to achieve greater energy security in their own right.

Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Economic, Energy and Business Affairs Robert Cekuta described U.S. assistance to Burma's oil and gas sector in a recent speech to U.S. energy professionals.

"We continue to work closely with the government to identify where we can be of assistance in helping Myanmar reach the ultimate goal of creating a transparent, well-managed energy sector that can attract the many responsible, highly regarded oil and gas companies," Cekuta said.

Donilon said the United States is also providing technical advice to African countries working to develop recently discovered energy resources. The United States is

working with partner countries in Europe, the Middle East and the Western Hemisphere to meet the shared challenges of bringing nonconventional energy sources online to meet the needs of the future.

Energy sources, supplies and availability no longer can be considered on their own, however. Scientific consensus on the warming climate has become an integral element in global energy chemistry. Lowering atmospheric emissions vented in the use of carbon-based fuels to slow the warming process is not just important, but “a national security challenge,” Donilon said.

“The national security impacts of climate change stem from the increasingly severe environmental impacts it is having on countries and people around the world,” Donilon said.

The security threats loom large, according to various analyses, with the potential to spark instability and conflict in the worst cases. In less violent but still urgent scenarios, governments and militaries may confront huge humanitarian disasters if sea levels rise to inundate occupied or agricultural areas.

But the United States has a new resource to apply to energy problems: Secretary of State John Kerry, who Donilon calls “one of the most experienced and impassioned climate diplomats America has ever had.”

Kerry now works to engage international collaboration to bring clean energy tech on line and reduce emissions. The Clean Energy Ministerial, a forum for international collaboration on clean energy involving the countries that produce 75 percent of global emissions, is already at work on the best methods for the transition to cleaner technologies.

U.S. Policy Spotlights the Human Right of Religious Freedom

By Jane Morse | Staff Writer | 16 May 2013

Washington — Among U.S. values, religious freedom is prominent, and it is a human right the United States vigilantly protects at home and spotlights in its foreign policy.

Secretary of State John Kerry, at his confirmation hearing, stated that religious freedom is “at the core of who we [Americans] are. ... Carrying the banner of religious tolerance, diversity and pluralism is critical.”

Religious liberty is not just an American right protected under the U.S. Constitution, President Obama said early in 2013, “it is a universal human right to be protected here at home and across the globe. This freedom is an essential part of human dignity, and without it our world cannot

know lasting peace.”

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes that every person, in every corner of the globe, has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This includes the freedom to change his or her religion or beliefs, and — either alone or in community with others, publicly or privately — to manifest his or her religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Freedom of religion, according to Denis McDonough, deputy national security adviser to President Obama, “is a key ingredient for stable, successful societies and a just world. We know that countries that truly protect religious freedom are more likely to develop and prosper. They’re more likely to have stable democracies.”

“We know that the lack of religious freedom — or discriminating against people because of their faith — can be a recipe for instability,” McDonough said in a speech in September 2012 on U.S. policy and international religious freedom.

“When people of faith are denied the opportunity to worship freely, or assemble in fellowship, grievances fester,” McDonough said. “It creates fissures and mistrust between faiths and sects. It fuels sectarianism as people pull back to the perceived safety of their fellow believers. It emboldens extremists. It can increase instability and the likelihood of violence and war. We’ve seen this throughout history. We’ve seen it during conflicts in our own time, from Northern Ireland to Lebanon to the Balkans.”

Religious controversy, acknowledged U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom Suzan Johnson Cook, affects politics in many countries — one reason that the Obama administration has promoted religious freedom as an integral component of U.S. foreign policy.

Constant vigilance is required to protect religious freedom, Cook said in remarks delivered in April at the Catholic University of America.

“I don’t believe there is a religion that escapes being attacked in some corner of the globe,” said Cook, who travels the world espousing religious freedom. “I have talked with Muslims facing discrimination, Christians unable to openly follow their faith, Buddhists who aren’t allowed to practice their beliefs, Jews who encounter societal hatred. No group is immune from attack. That is why we defend everyone’s right to believe, or not to believe, according to the dictates of their own conscience.”

The release of the International Religious Freedom Report for 2012 by the U.S. Department of State, scheduled for

May 20, represents the continuing commitment of the United States to uphold the human right of religious freedom the world over.

The report, which assesses how governments for some 200 countries protect the religious freedom of their citizens, represents the annual effort by U.S. embassies around the globe to collect information from government officials, religious leaders, nongovernmental organizations, journalists, human rights monitors, religious groups, academics and others.

The report is mandated by the U.S. Congress under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 and is used by U.S. government agencies to shape policy, conduct diplomacy and inform assistance, training and other resource allocations. The U.S. secretary of state also uses the report to help determine which countries have engaged in or tolerated “particularly severe violations” of religious freedom, otherwise known as “countries of particular concern.”

U.S. Diaspora Communities Could Strengthen Middle East Nations

By Kathryn McConnell | Staff Writer | 15 May 2013

Washington — Middle East-born Americans are important sources of the investment, skills and volunteerism that countries in their home region need to energize economic development, says America’s top diplomat for economic growth, energy and the environment.

In recent years, the United States has worked to strengthen links between these diaspora communities and their home countries, Robert Hormats said May 14 at the 2013 Global Diaspora Forum at the State Department. Hormats is the under secretary of state for economic growth, energy and the environment.

The two-day forum sponsored by the State Department, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the Migration Policy Institute and other partners challenged diaspora communities to build partnerships with the private sector, civic groups and public institutions in their countries of origin to make their engagement more effective and sustainable.

According to a forum statement, diaspora communities are potential assets to their countries of origin because they are familiar with the countries’ languages and cultures, they have an ability to tolerate risk, they have personal and professional networks, and they are motivated to improve living standards in those countries.

“The potential of these diaspora communities is vast,” Hormats told the forum. “They offer critical sources of

investment capital and business skills that the Middle East countries in transition need to tap in order to place themselves on a sustainable path to development.”

Hormats said the United States encourages governments in the Middle East to seek business investments from U.S. diaspora communities. “The impact on confidence could be large” as businesses in the region see that American diaspora investors are knowledgeable about their markets, he said.

Hormats said more than 62 million people in the United States are first- or second-generation diaspora members, including 470,000 Iranians and 200,000 Egyptians.

The diplomat said these diaspora communities benefit America, adding that Iran’s leading scientific and technological university has more alumni in California than anywhere else in the world.

In addition, over the last decade, Iranian Americans have contributed in major ways to workshops put on by the U.S. National Academy of Sciences covering topics such as food-borne diseases, water conservation, recycling, the ecology of the Caspian Sea, drought forecasting and management, and improvement of earthquake response, he said.

“This is one of the most meaningful ways of maintaining links between the United States and Iran today,” Hormats said.

“We need to invite, welcome and honor those from around the world who want to come here for a new life, who want to build new businesses, engage in the creation of new technologies, and contribute to our medical science,” he said.

The 2013 forum was the third year of the event.

Secretary Kerry on Climate Change, Future of the Arctic

14 May 2013

This blog post by Secretary of State John F. Kerry was originally published in the Huffington Post on May 14. There are no republication restrictions for use by U.S. embassies.

Climate Change and the Future of the Arctic

By John Kerry

In 1867, Secretary of State William Seward negotiated the purchase of Alaska, officially extending America into the Arctic, dramatically changing not only our map, but our landscape, resources and identity.

What Seward could never have foreseen was the way, nearly 150 years later, climate change would dramatically change the Arctic itself -- and leave his successors in our government with a set of challenges and opportunities few would have imagined even a decade ago. Seward negotiated the purchase of a territory; climate change demands we negotiate a whole new set of relationships and responses that affect our economy, our health, our security, and our interests as an Arctic power. As I travel to Kiruna, the northernmost city in Sweden, for this year's meeting of the Arctic Council, all of these realities are front and center.

Our warming planet means the Arctic's ecosystem is experiencing significant, rapid shifts with far-reaching consequences. Last September, the extent of sea ice covering the Arctic Ocean reached record lows, threatening marine mammal life and local populations dependent upon them. Receding sea ice might also bring new commerce and industry to the region, including exploration of offshore oil and gas, as well as minerals. New Arctic shipping routes could significantly decrease transit times between Pacific and Atlantic ports.

All of the changes in the Arctic must change the way we approach the region. The Obama administration's new National Strategy for the Arctic Region prioritizes domestic infrastructure development as Arctic conditions change, responsible stewardship, and enhanced cooperation with our international partners. We're focused on ensuring a secure, peaceful, and prosperous Arctic.

One of the most valuable forums in which the United States can work is the Arctic Council, which is why I am proud to be just the second Secretary of State to attend its biennial conclave where the eight Arctic States address regional environmental, economic, and indigenous issues. This week in Kiruna, I will sign an agreement on marine oil pollution preparedness and response that provides a framework for cooperation in the event of an Arctic oil emergency. Just as with the massive challenge of climate change, we must be ready today for tomorrow's crises.

Beginning in May 2015 and lasting two years -- through the 150th anniversary of the Alaska purchase -- the United States will take the helm of the Arctic Council. It's an exciting opportunity for America to lead in the region, and it couldn't come at a more critical time.

Secretary Seward's embrace of Alaska marked America's first step in Arctic leadership. A century and a half into that journey, we accept today's challenges with the same spirit of determination.

John Kerry is the U.S. Secretary of State.

President Obama, U.K.'s Cameron Discuss G8 Summit, Regional Issues

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr. | Staff Writer | 13 May 2013

Washington — The United States and Britain reaffirmed a commitment to global development in helping to eradicate an array of economic, health and food problems, President Obama says.

British Prime Minister David Cameron met with Obama in the Oval Office at the White House May 13 to discuss trade and economic cooperation, Syria, countering terrorism and priorities for the upcoming Group of Eight (G8) Summit in Northern Ireland, which Cameron will host.

On global development, Obama told journalists at a morning press briefing that he and Cameron were encouraged by the ambitious reforms underway at the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, where both nations have been stepping up efforts. Obama also said that Cameron will make nutrition and food security significant topics for the June G8 Summit.

Obama thanked Cameron for his leadership, partnership and support going into the annual meeting of the world's largest and most advanced economies.

Britain holds the G8 presidency in 2013, and Cameron will lead the meeting to be held June 17-18 in Enniskillen in Northern Ireland. A significant portion of his Oval Office meeting with Obama was to review the summit agenda.

"I appreciate [Cameron's] updating me on the agenda as it takes shape, and we discussed how the summit will be another opportunity to sustain the global economic recovery with a focus on growth and creating jobs for our people," Obama said during a White House press conference.

The G8, which is a forum for the world's eight wealthiest nations, includes Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia and the United States.

Cameron told reporters that open trade will be at the heart of the agenda for ambitious action for economic growth during the G8, but also greater openness for advanced and developing economies. He also said that as nations open up their economies to get business growing, there is an equal need for corporations to pay taxes properly and enable citizens to hold their governments and businesses to account.

"We need to know who really owns a company, who profits from it, whether taxes are paid," Cameron said.

"And we need a new mechanism to track where multinationals make their money and where they pay their taxes so we can stop those that are manipulating the system unfairly."

Cameron said that he and Obama have championed the development of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership between the United States and the European Union. He said there's a real chance now for progress to launch the agreement in time for the G8 in the next five weeks.

Obama said that trade with Britain is central to the United States' broader trans-Atlantic economic relationship, which supports more than 13 million jobs.

On Afghanistan, Obama said he and Cameron reviewed progress in shifting the security lead to the Afghan National Army.

"As planned, Afghan forces will take the lead for security across the country soon this spring. U.S., British and coalition forces will move into a support role, our troops will continue to come home, and the war will end by the end of next year, even as we work with our Afghan partners to make sure that Afghanistan is never again a haven for terrorists who would attack our nations," Obama said.

The two leaders also discussed the civil crisis in Syria and "the appalling violence being inflicted on the Syrian people."

"Together, we're going to continue our efforts to increase pressure on the Assad regime, to provide humanitarian aid to the long-suffering Syrian people, to strengthen the moderate opposition and to prepare for a democratic Syria without [Syrian President] Bashar Assad," Obama told reporters.

Boston Police Join International Efforts to Combat Crime

By Jane Morse | Staff Writer | 13 May 2013

Washington — The Boston Police Department became the most recent of more than 60 U.S. law enforcement agencies to commit to capacity-building partnerships with foreign law enforcement entities when it signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the U.S. Department of State May 13.

At a signing ceremony at the State Department with Boston Police Commissioner Edward Davis, Secretary of State John Kerry — who calls Boston home — said that by signing the MOU, the Boston Police Department will be helping itself as well as overseas law enforcement efforts.

"The countries we work with," Kerry said, "gain in law enforcement ability, in rule of law, in their justice system, and that helps everybody with respect to everything that affects us — counterterrorism, democracy-building, all of the things that matter to us in the long run." Among the benefits to the United States, Kerry said, is that "we build relationships, and out of those relationships can come mutual law enforcement assistance efforts. And we all benefit by that in this interconnected world we live in today."

For the past three years, the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs has been recruiting state and local law enforcement departments, corrections officials, prosecutors and judges to participate in its criminal justice assistance programs abroad. Participating U.S. police officers serve solely in an advisory capacity. Through training sessions and exchanges, U.S. partners help overseas law enforcement personnel develop the capacity to undermine criminal networks and reduce criminal threats both in the United States and in the partner nations. Funding for these programs is provided by the State Department.

Also on May 13, Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs William R. Brownfield conducted a special ceremony at the State Department to recognize the expertise provided by federal, state and local criminal justice partners to advance civilian security around the world. The ceremony also kicked off the first day of National Police Week in the United States, which brings thousands of law enforcement officers from around the world to Washington to honor law enforcement officers who have died in the line of duty.

At the ceremony, Brownfield presented the first Secretary of State Award for Excellence in Overseas Criminal Justice Assistance to the New York Police Department for its training assistance in Haiti. Other award winners were the Atlanta Police Department, the Chicago Police Department, the New Mexico Corrections Department, the Colorado Department of Corrections, the Delaware Attorney General's Office, the Department of Justice's International Criminal Investigative Training and Assistance Program and the Law Library of Congress for their contributions to building the capacities of overseas criminal justice personnel.

"What happens overseas," Brownfield said at the ceremony, "has an impact on us, our homes, our streets, our communities."

In describing partnerships between U.S. and overseas law enforcement, Brownfield acknowledged that "this is not a one-size-fits-all world."

"In some countries, some governments, some law enforcement communities, the engagement that we do with them is very focused, very specialized, dealing with specific issues," Brownfield said. "In others, countries are starting from a very, very low base, and you are in essence working with them to create from scratch a law enforcement community and a law enforcement profession."

"Our challenge," Brownfield said, "is to put the right resources, the right talent set and skill set into the individual country to reflect its reality." The one constant element, he said, is to train, equip, advise and assist. "And we will do one or more of those missions anywhere that we are deployed," he said.

In some cases the United States might do all four, while in others it might do only one, he said.

Global Harvests Projected to Reach Record Levels

By Kathryn McConnell | Staff Writer | 10 May 2013

Washington — Global production of rice, coarse grains and oilseeds will reach record highs during the 2013–2014 marketing year, while wheat production will be up 3 percent over the previous year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture reports in its World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates released May 10. The report is an initial assessment issued several times a year.

RICE

Rice production is projected to increase 9 percent from the previous year, resulting in a 2.4 million ton increase in world stocks. Record or near-record rice harvests are projected for India, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, the Philippines and sub-Saharan Africa. Large rice yields also are forecast for Burma, Cambodia and Egypt.

COARSE GRAINS

Global supplies of coarse grain (maize, barley, sorghum, oats and rye) for 2013–2014 are projected to reach record levels. The largest increases in maize production are projected for the countries of the former Soviet Union, members of the European Union and China, while large crop yields are again expected for Brazil and Argentina. World maize stocks are expected to reach a 13-year high.

OILSEEDS

The record global production of oilseeds (soybean, rapeseed, sunflower seed, cotton seed and peanut) for 2013–2014 will be up 4.7 percent from the previous year, with global soybean production up 6 percent. Argentina's soybean crop is expected to be up from the previous year and Brazil's soy production will reach a record level,

according to the report. China soybean production is projected to be down slightly from the 2012–2013 level as farmers continue to shift from planting soy to more profitable crops. China's cumulative soy harvest could be down 28 percent in the past four years, the report said.

WHEAT

Global wheat production for 2013–2014 is projected to increase in all of the world's major exporting countries, with the largest increases expected in the former Soviet Union countries and the European Union. Additional production increases are expected for Australia, Argentina and Canada.

MEAT

Continued declines in U.S. beef production are expected to push beef exports down in 2014 while U.S. pork exports are expected to rebound in 2014 as production increases and demand improves.

Broiler and turkey production are forecast higher as the forecast of lower feed prices encourages expansion despite lower poultry prices, the report said.

COTTON

World cotton production is projected to be nearly 3 percent lower in 2013–2014 than the previous year. The United States, China, Turkey, Greece and Mexico are expected to have lower production while Brazil, India, Pakistan and Australia are expected to have production increases.

World cotton stocks in 2013–2014 are expected to reach a record for the third consecutive year. China's policy of stockpiling cotton in its reserve is also assumed to continue.

Marketing-year start dates vary by commodity.

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov>)